

# Consultee Comment for planning application 23/02098/OUT

<b>Application Number</b>	23/02098/OUT
<b>Location</b>	Begbroke Science Park Begbroke Hill Begbroke OX5 1PF
<b>Proposal</b>	<p>Outline application, with all matters reserved, for a multi-phased (severable), comprehensive residential-led mixed use development comprising: Up to 215,000 square metres gross external area of residential floorspace (or c.1,800 homes which depending on the housing mix could result in a higher or lower number of housing units) within Use Class C3/C4 and large houses of multiple occupation (Sui Generis); Supporting social infrastructure including secondary school/primary school(s) (Use Class F1); health, indoor sport and recreation, emergency and nursery facilities (Class E(d)-(f)). Supporting retail, leisure and community uses, including retail (Class E(a)), cafes and restaurants (Class E(b)), commercial and professional services (Class E(c)), a hotel (Use Class C1), local community uses (Class F2), and other local centre uses within a Sui Generis use including public houses, bars and drinking establishments (including with expanded food provision), hot food takeaways, venues for live music performance, theatre, and cinema. Up to 155,000 net additional square metres (gross external area) of flexible employment uses including research and development, office and workspace and associated uses (Use E(g)), industrial (Use Class B2) and storage (Use Class B8) in connection with the expansion of Begbroke Science Park; Highway works, including new vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian roads and paths, improvements to the existing Sandy Lane and Begbroke Hill road, a bridge over the Oxford Canal, safeguarded land for a rail halt, and car and cycle parking with associated electric vehicle charging infrastructure; Landscape and public realm, including areas for sustainable urban drainage systems, allotments, biodiversity areas, outdoor play and sports facilities (Use Class F2(c)); Utility, energy, water, and waste water facilities and infrastructure; together with enabling, site clearance, demolition and associated works, including temporary meanwhile uses. The Proposed Development affects the setting of a listed building and includes potential alterations to public rights of way. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement</p>
<b>Case Officer</b>	Andrew Thompson
<b>Organisation</b>	Ecology (CDC)
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	Cherwell District Council Bodicote House White Post Road Bodicote Banbury OX15 4AA
<b>Type of Comment</b>	Object
<b>Type</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	<p>Thank you for your consultation request regarding this outline application.</p> <p>It is understood that a Biodiversity Improvement and Management Plan (BIMP) is to be submitted at the reserved matters stage, rather than the outline stage, due to current lack of information about the details of the development. However, there are some ecological details that need to be provided at this stage to determine whether ecological constraints can be feasibly addressed.</p> <p>I cannot find any information regarding mitigation proposed for GCN. There is a pond with confirmed presence of GCN in the centre of the site. Even if this pond is to remain as is, increased recreation, traffic, etc could result in impacts to this species. I would like to see that GCN have been considered fully and that there is a plan to ensure this species is not negatively impacted by the works.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the lack of information about badger populations using this site. Surveys were undertaken in 2022 and in 2018, which found 3 main setts and several outlier setts. However, I do not think that there was any monitoring of these setts to determine how they were used, territorial details, etc. I am not sure how a robust mitigation and compensation plan can be produced without this data. The Environmental Statement Addendum (November 2023, Quod) states that the CEMP has been updated to include additional badger protection measures, which look acceptable. However, I cannot find details of which setts will be closed, how many artificial setts are proposed, or if any other mitigation will be put in place. There is some mention of an artificial sett proposed within the Central Park area ? although details for this (timing, location, etc.) are not clear.</p>

Furthermore, this location does not appear to be suitable; badgers need more secluded areas and this park is going to be well used for formal recreation. These details should be provided at this stage so that we can be sure that mitigation is feasible and badger populations can be protected.

There is an 11ha area of land proposed for Skylark mitigation/compensation. However, there is a lack of detailed information submitted about this skylark mitigation/compensation. I cannot find details about how it was determined that 11ha would be sufficient to compensate for lost skylark habitat. Other ground nesting birds were mentioned in the baseline reports, but there does appear to be any targeted mitigation for species other than skylark. I assume this information is within bird survey reports, but it does not appear to be included with this application.

The Outline CEMP provides a general overview of how ecology will be protected during the works, which all seems acceptable in principle. I would expect the final CEMP to include further specific details. We should condition that a full, updated CEMP is provided with any future reserved matters applications.

Similarly, the Outline LEMP provides a rough idea of how the landscape will be managed for wildlife, but a detailed LEMP should be provided with any future reserved matters applications. The LEMP should include a detailed management scheme for the 11ha of land being designated for Skylark mitigation, including how public access to this area will be restricted.

Rushy Meadows SSSI is adjacent to the northern boundary of the Site. The Environmental Statement Addendum (November 2023, Quod) increases the original buffer from 15m to 20m and confirms that at least 29.2ha of land will be improved as a Local Nature Reserve and buffer the SSSI from the developed areas. A management plan detailing how this 29.9ha of land will be converted and managed as a LNR should be provided as this is fundamental to ensuring that the SSSI is not impacted and that the development is in line with the local plan. This should be conditioned.

The BNG metric and Assessment show that a 20% net gain is achievable across the site, including areas that are dedicated to enhancing the Lower Cherwell Valley CTA. However, as stated in the assessment, these figures are based off an illustrative masterplan that is likely to change. When the masterplan is finalised, an updated BNG assessment should be submitted to show that the net gain described in this assessment is still achievable. We should condition that an updated BNG assessment is submitted to and approved by the LPA with any reserved matters application.

It is proposed that bird/bat brick provisions are each installed in 20% of the dwellings. However, CDC seeks the equivalent of at least one bird/bat brick provision within all new dwellings. These can be clustered, however, I'd like to see an increase in the proposed number of bird/bat boxes across the site.

A bat licence will be required for any works to buildings or trees with confirmed bat roosts. It should be noted that updated surveys will be required in order to apply for a licence. We should condition that a bat licence is obtained before commencement of any works where an offence under Regulation 41 of the Habitat and Species Regulations 2010 is likely to occur.

The Framework Lighting Strategy (Buro Happold, July 2023) includes dark corridors for bats and wildlife. However, it should be noted that the report references an old BCT guidance note. The final lighting strategy should incorporate the BCT new guidance note (Guidance note 08/23) as well as the updates listed in the Environmental Statement Addendum (November 2023, Quod). I also have some concern over the lighting of the path in the northeast corner. The path is proposed to be lit at 2.0 lux, but BCT guidance recommends that illuminance is reduced to <0.5 lux within dark corridors and on key & supporting features or habitats. The provision of an updated lighting strategy at the reserved matters stage, including submission of contour plans illustrating Lux levels, should be conditioned.

Please let me know when the above information is submitted so I can reassess.  
Megan Belanger

**Received Date**

17/01/2024 17:58:23

**Attachments**